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# REFLECTIONS

UPON THE

## CONDUCT

OF THE

### King of Great Britain

In the late W A R S.

Contained in a LETTER from a Subject of  
One of the Confederated Princes, to a Friend in  
*HOLLAND.*

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*Done into English.*

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S I R,

**S**Ince in renewing the Correspondence between us, which has so long a time been interrupted you are fall'n upon the subject of the Affairs of *Europe*, and particularly touching the share that the King of *Great Britain* has had therein for some late years, which has given you occasion to take some freedom in making reflections upon the Conduct of that Prince; I do not doubt but you now reciprocally expect my Sentiments upon this Matter, which by consequence I will give you, with the same liberty, but also with all the impartiality, that an honest Man can have in judging of the actions of others, and much more of those of Great Princes. You may easily imagine, I know nothing of the Articles of that Treaty of Alliance you speak of, between the said King and *Spain*, and I must confess to you, that the Author of the Reflections upon that Treaty, seems to have found a fine matter for the exercising of his Pen. But as amongst all the sportings of his Wit, the severest Remark he makes, seems to me to be in the Paragraph where he blames that King for not having endeavoured to put a stop to the course of the Victories of *France* when it lay in his Power; and for having contributed more than any Other to the Greatness of *France*: it does likewise concern us Allies, for the measures we are to take, to judge soberly. If this imputation can be justly charged upon that Prince, it is then very true, that to take the thing in general, 'tis difficult not to lay the blame at His Door, for not having taken the part of the Allies before the Peace, and that this seems to justify Our Resentments against Him. However, to give them so much the more ground, if they are just, let us consider what time in the course of Affairs could be assigned to Him for the entering into War; and to decide that question in general, it seems it ought to have been either when the Interest of His Nation, or His own Honour, or the Necessity of the Allies began to exact it. Now as for the Interest of His Nation, and principally of His Great City of *London*, methinks that King could not have chosen a better Policy, than after being got out of the War, wherein He had left His Neighbours engaged, to keep His People as long as He could in Peace, and in a state of enjoying alone the Commerce of *Europe*, an advantage which We know was envied them with anguish by you *Hollanders*, and which made you so impatient to engage *England* in a War as well

well as your selves, even before the Honour of that King obliged Him to it, or He was pressed to it by the Necessity of the Allies. As for the Honour of His Majesty, what could He desire more glorious, than to see Himself the Sole Mediatour, and when He pleas'd, the Arbitrator of the Affairs of *Europe*, to receive the Differences and Addresses of all other Princes, and in short, to have it in His Power to re-establish a sure and Honourable Peace, when He thought convenient, either by His own sole Authority; or by joining His own Forces to it, when it should be necessary to employ them for that purpose: this Case of Necessity being the sole one, which could change the Considerations of the Honour of His Majesty, and the Interest of His Nation. We've now to examine at what time it began, when it was pressing, and how far we may impute to the Prince we speak of, the having failed in what all these Considerations together Counsell'd Him to do. We shall easily agree, that while Our Forces were sufficient, not only to defend us, but even to attempt upon *France*, it would not have been handsome for us to have propos'd to that King to have engaged Himself contrary to the Interest of His Nation. Now it is manifest that during the three first Campaigns, at least after the Peace between His Majesty and *Holland*, We were in that posture, which may be easily made appear by looking back upon the events of those Campaigns. Certain it is that at and after the Battel of *Senefse*, in the Year 1674: the Forces of *France* were worrit and continued in the weakest condition, the Prince of *Conde* was obliged to retire beyond the *Sambre*; and the Army of the Confederates was then in a posture of laying Siege to *Oudenarde*; and though the Prince of *Conde* made an effort to come suddenly to its relief, he would in all probability have been repulsed, if the Count de *Souber*, General of the Imperial Army, would have come up in time according to the Advice of the Prince of *Orange*, of which His Highness made great Complaints to the Emperour, and several of the Principal Officers of the Army refused to serve any longer under this Count, which obliged the Emperour to to take away his Commission. The Armies of the Allies were likewise much the stronger upon the *Rhine* that same Campaign; the Elector of *Brandenbourg* took his Winter Quarters in *Alsatia*, from whence Monsieur de *Turenne* was obliged to retire and go to *Paris*; and though by an admirable Diligence and Conduct, he returned the same Winter, and constrained the Forces of the Elector to repass the *Rhine*, which he likewise pass'd himself in order to the Campaign of 1675. This however having been his last and fatal Year, General *Montecuculi* repulsed and pursu'd his Army, diminished by above half, to the other side of the said River, and laid Siege to *Saverne*: and though when the Prince of *Conde* (who was sent to save the Ruines of that Army, and give reparation to the Affairs of *France*) approached him, he rais'd the Siege, yet indeed it was only to triumph over that Prince, and to drive him before him as far as he pleas'd, after which when it seem'd he might have made some good use of his advantage, he attempted nothing farther before their going into Winter-Quarters. On the other side the total rout of the *Marshal de Crequi* by the Forces of the Dukes of *Lunenbourg*, and the recovery thereupon of the City of *Treves* out of the hands of the *French*, had reduced their Affairs into that condition, that His Most Christian Majesty found not a more present remedy, than to have recourse to His *Archibishop*, which was likewise beaten by the Duke of *Lorraine*, the Elector of *Brandenbourg* having besides so gloriously freed his Country from the *Swedes* and the Duke of *Lunenbourg* and Bishop of *Munster* having stript them of all they possess'd in the Dutchy of *Bremen*, except the City of *Staden*; *Denmark* having likewise taken part in the War, whereby the *Swedes* remained altogether unable to defend themselves, and much less to assist *France*, the Forces of the Allies began to be formidable to it, and found themselves capable in the Campaign of 1676, to attempt at the same time the two Sieges of *Maastricht* and *Philipsbourg*. But as the most of 'em saw themselves in a fair way of making Conquests, Jealousie began to rise up among them, each Party fearing that his Neighbour would have too good a share therein, the Disputes for the Dividend having delayed the taking of *Staden*, and the succours which were to have come to the Prince of *Orange*, of the Troops which blocked up that Place, were the causes that this Prince was obliged to raise the Siege of *Maastricht*, during which the *French* had time to take *Aire* from the *Spaniards*. Hitherto we all thought our selves uppermost in our Affairs, which I might easily demonstrate by things that pass'd openly in the Congress of *Nimeguen*, which it was clearly to be seen by all the World, that the Most Christian King aimed at nothing but securing His Honour by a Peace that might have given us satisfaction. But after the misfortune of *Maastricht*, the *Hollanders* began to fear with more apprehension what afterwards happened, namely, That the remissness and different interests of the German Princes, the weakness of *Spain*, and the diligence of the *French*, the *Spanish Low Countries* would be swallowed up in spite of all the Forces of the Confederates. Yet as by the taking of *Philipsbourg* the Power of the Empe-



Emperour was augmented, by that of *Staden* the Princes of *Lunenburg* and of *Munster* had their Hands free, that they promised a good and sincere Correspondence; and as there were great hopes conceived from the Zeal and good Conduct of the Duke of *Lorraine*, who commanded the Imperial Army, the Power of the Allies seemed still vigorous and formidable. But as the Most Christian King, by his usual diligence, began the Campaign of 1677. with the Sieges of *St. Omer* and of *Cambray* at the same time, before any Army of the Allies could or would appear, except that of the *States*, and the Prince of *Orange* being netled with the reproaches of the *Spaniards*, that he did but eat up their good Land of *Waes*, while he saw two of their Towns besieged, out of a generosity which filled them with admiration, hazarded both his Army and Person for the relief of *St. Omers*, but without any other success than what might be expected from an Army inferiour in Forces to that it attacked, which was likewise powerfully succoured by that of the Kings inasmuch as the above mentioned Places and the Town of *Valenciennes* were thereupon taken by the *French*, and afterwards the Prince of *Orange* was obliged to quit the Enterprize of *Charleroy*, by a laudable and necessary prudence not to hazard once again all the Forces the *States* had left for their defence. On the other side it was evident that it was impossible for the Duke of *Lorraine*, and would be always so for the *Imperialists* to make any great Invasion into *France*, or to execute any considerable Enterprize elsewhere, while the *French* should content themselves with acting upon the defensive with a sufficient Army. I must confess it was in that juncture our Affairs began to stand in need of some powerful intercession of the Prince whose Conduct we are considering, and it is from what passed since in *England*, that we are principally to judge of his intentions.

The Parliament had been a long time making him Addresses to recal his Troops out of the service of *France*; and though His Majesty suffering at the same time Six Regiments of His Subjects in *Holland*, and being to keep his Neutrality as Mediatour, did at first only forbid by His Proclamations any new Troops from passing into *France*. He recalled them at length, and they returned very much diminished in number, and misused as is well known. But as this was but the least remedy to our evils, and the Parliament had more warmly taken the Alarm, in the beginning of the Campaign 1677, Those Gentlemen were of Opinion that it was time to make some Paces towards a War, and prayed the King in their Addresses to fortifie himself with Alliances against *France*. Hereupon to our misfortune, which will be found theirs likewise at the end of the account, Jealousies began to break out between the King and His Parliament. His Majesty demanded of them a Sum of 600000 *l.* Sterling, as necessary for the putting him in a posture of speaking and acting as became him. Those Gentlemen gave him only credit for 200000 Pounds with general promises of assisting him after he had made His Alliances. His Majesty imagined that the course they took was an encroachment upon his Prerogatives, and upon that Prorogued from time to time their Assembly, until the beginning of the Year 1678. In the mean while, after the end of the aforementioned Campaign of 1677, He called his Nephew the Prince of *Orange* into *England*, for the Personally concerting Affairs with him, and gave him in Marriage the Lady *Mary*, against the will, as was believed, of the Duke of *York*, that Princesses Father, which methinks is a sufficient testimony that this King withdrew himself entirely from *France*, and it has not been doubted but that the *French* so understood it. His Majesty made likewise thereupon an Alliance with your Republick, and at the assembling of the Parliament, communicated to them these things, with promises if they would arm him sufficiently to enter into a War, he would never be at rest until he had re-established a Peace in *Christendom*, which any one Prince should not be capable of disturbing. Those Gentlemen thereupon presented him an Address, wherein giving him still only general promises of assistance, they desired him to make new Alliances, engage all his Allies not to make any Peace, but upon the foot of the Treaty of the *Pyrenees*, nor to have any Commerce with *France*, nor to suffer the Ships of any Nation to enter or go out of the Ports of that Kingdom. This Proposition which was very remarkable gave different motions to those it concerned. Most of the Allies took Courage seeing the assurance and resolution with which those Gentlemen spoke. It gave astonishment to you in *Holland*, where you were not desirous to embark in a long War, and were content with a Peace of less safety, and your profound Dreamers in Policy did already imagine that the *English* might carry their Arms as far as formerly into *France*. But it was very displeasing to the King as may be seen by the answer he made thereto, which was found very rational, and wherein after his Arguments, he presses them again to hasten their assistance of Money as the time required. But there still passed a Month or more before they



they compleated the Resolution for Money to raise Forces. By that time the *French* had made themselves Masters of *Ghent*, and were in a condition of proceeding much further, before the Succours that were preparing in *England* could hinder them. The *Hollanders* seeing none of their Allies ready, some refusing to March, their own Forces being for the greatest part in the *Spanish* Towns, from whence they could not withdraw them, the rest being incapable to defend them, were in a great consternation. The Most Christian King did not fail to take advantage of this juncture, and having made them Propositions of a General Peace, which he caus'd to be Printed, they easily disposed themselves to accept them, and to perswade their Allies to do the like. They sent for that purpose to the Duke of *Villa Hermosa* who opposed it a long time, but the Parliament in *England* seeing by the disposition of the *Hollanders*, that it would be almost impossible to prevent the Peace, and not being willing to leave the King armed, turned all their thoughts from War, and took the resolution to speak no more of Money, until they had obtained their demands in affairs of Religion, that Duke did likewise then accept of the Peace, seeing there was no timely succour to be expected from *England*.

This, Sir, I take to be the true Draught of things, from whence we are to judge if the King of *England* is the only cause of the Greatness of *France*. We may certainly say, the Jealousies that arose betwixt him and his Parliaments are the true occasion of them. It was to be wish'd both for Him and Us, that either one Party or other had yielded sooner. I am not well enough acquainted with the Maxims of their Country to decide positively which ought to have done it. The King not only thought his Prerogatives were usurped upon, but seem'd to have just apprehensions of engaging in a War, which it would be in the Power of his People to put an end to by shutting their Purses. If they had furnished him with the Sum of 600000 Pounds when he demanded it, he might either have engaged himself in a War, or been in a posture of making Peace as he thought convenient; but those Gentlemen apprehended to put Arms into the Hands of His Majesty for fear that he should make use of 'em to render himself absolute. However since they found it necessary to do it afterwards, had it not been better they had done it in time? To speak the Truth, methinks that Great Body though compos'd of so many Wise Heads, did not sufficiently foresee what might happen, or, those Gentlemen did secretly aim at Peace, while they openly declared for War, and they hoped the heat and resolution which they shew'd for the latter, would produce the former without striking a blow, and such an one too as they desired. We must however say that they shewed a great deal of Wisdom in not continuing inflexibly bent to the last, to hazard rather the Ruine of *Europe*, than to confide an Army in the King. The consideration they had for the Publick Good has likewise appear'd in that they made no difficulty of paying that Army, though the King kept it on foot much longer than they ordered, for the obliging the *French* to restore the Towns of the *Spanish* Netherlands, before the restitution of the *Swedes*. The King likewise on his side, had manifestly made appear the little ground there was to suspect him of a design to render Himself Absolute; since having that Army so long at his Disposal, he made not the least use of it to that purpose. Methinks then that His Subjects may be in repose on that side, and would to God for our Interests, that the future Parliaments may be in the same disposition as was that we speak of, of yielding rather to His Majesty, than suffer *France* to draw the fatal advantages from their Dissention, which in all likelihood it will endeavour to do.

I am, &c.

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